

**WILLIAMSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM WORK SESSION
Wednesday, February 7, 2007**

A work session of the Williamsburg Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, January 24, 2007, at 4:00 p.m., in Conference Room 3A, Williamsburg Municipal Building, 401 Lafayette Street.

ATTENDANCE AND CALL TO ORDER

Present were Commissioners Pons, McBeth, Hertzler, Driscoll, Joseph, Kafes and Young. Also present were Planning Director Nester, Deputy Planning Director Murphy, Zoning Administrator Rhodes and City Manager Tuttle.

OPEN FORUM

David Kranbuehl, 201 Harrison Avenue, said that he had been elected as the Chairman of the Beautification Advisory Committee, and gave the Commission an update about the last BAC meeting. He noted the work that the Committee is doing regarding improvements to City corridors, with the initial emphasis on Lafayette Street. He also said that the Committee is working with the Master Gardeners on grants for entrance sign landscaping improvements for Highland Park and Skipwith Farms subdivisions.

Mr. Kranbuehl, addressing the Capital Improvement Program, said that underground wiring is an important issues, and there is a need to look at the big picture and prioritize the entire City. He said that more work also needs to be done on sidewalk improvements.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Mr. Nester reviewed the major projects in the proposed five-year Capital Improvement Program, as outlined in the meeting packet.

Mrs. McBeth asked about the plans for library expansion. Mr. Tuttle said that nothing is budgeted at this time because of property acquisition issues – there is money in the contingency category that could support this project. He said the concept is to locate administrative and internet services on an adjacent site downtown to free up space in the main library. He said the City supports keeping the administrative headquarters for the library downtown.

Mr. Pons asked about underground wiring priorities. Mr. Tuttle said the guiding principle is to focus on the entrance corridors – projects like South Henry Street have been on the list for a long time. Other streets include Page Street/Capitol Landing Road and Second Street – Page Street will be the next increment as we move out from the

downtown area. Mr. Pons mentioned two critical areas – in front of the Yorkshire Restaurant on York Street, and the crossing of Lafayette Street between Walgreens and Chesapeake Bank. Mr. Tuttle noted that the difficulty with York Street is the fact that the wires are basically right over the City line.

Mr. Hertzler asked about the process for considering the expansion or replacement of the Stryker Building. Mr. Tuttle said that the first step is to relocate the existing tenants. The Fire Department administration and the EOC will be the first to move, and the the WRHA and Registrar need to find other quarters. Only after this has been resolved can we move ahead on future plans. Mr. Hertzler asked about City needs for the next five or ten years. Mr. Tuttle reviewed past City analysis and discussed growth of staff and future staffing needs. Mrs. McBeth said that additional employees generate the need for additional parking which takes away from parking needed for citizens transacting business with the City. Mr. Tuttle said that a key issue is the ability to move Human Services from the Municipal Building, freeing up space for expansion of the Finance Department. He said that a new Stryker Building would also allow City Manager and City Council functions to be moved to the new building, freeing up space for development related departments on the second floor of the Municipal Building (Planning, Codes Compliance, Public Works). Mr. Driscoll raised issues about the possibilities for rethinking the Municipal Center area, including the Blayton Building. Mr. Nester noted that the entire Municipal Center had been reconfigured over the past 10 years.

Mr. Pons asked about the funding of Capital Improvement expenditures. Mr. Tuttle said that the primary funding is the 1% sales tax, which is about \$4 million per year. He said this also funds debt service on capital improvements, which is about \$1.5 million per year. He said that there are also other funding sources – developer contributions in the case of the Quarterpath Road improvements, and VDOT urban allocations for traffic signal improvements. Mr. Pons suggested considering borrowing based on anticipated future revenue from projects such as High Street and Quarterpath at Williamsburg.

School funding was discussed by several Commissioners, and Mr. Tuttle noted that the percent of the City budget devoted to schools has been reduced over the years from 34% to 26%. He said a lot of communities are spending 50-60% of their budget on schools.

Mr. Hertzler raised the issue of “lean management,” which led to a general discussion about administrative efficiency and the role of government.

Mr. Kafes said that he still feels that Quarterpath Road should be completed between Route 199 and York Street, particularly in light of the rezoning request for the Quarterpath Crossing shopping center. He said that more interconnected roads are needed City wide.

Discussion shifted again to underground wiring. The crossing at York Street near the City line was discussed, and Mr. Tuttle again noted that the problem is the fact that the bad wires are just outside of the City. Mr. Pons said that to do nothing is to accept a big mess. Mr. Tuttle said that possibly the regional project for Route 60 improvements could bring a focus and a resolution to this issue. Mr. Young said that the regional corridor project doesn't have the funds to address the underground wiring issue, but that the timing is right to push the discussion forward. Mrs. McBeth agreed that this should be a priority project, but not a line item in the CIP for this year.

Mr. Hertzler said that the Second Street area is an underutilized part of town, and suggested considering a process to turn the area into a more pedestrian oriented development. He said that the upcoming BlueGreen development will generate a lot of activity. Mrs. McBeth said that with the four lanes of Second Street, it is not a particularly pedestrian friendly area. Mr. Driscoll suggested considering purchasing the old Exxon station on the corner of Page Street and other nearby underutilized properties – with a vision and five or ten years, something could happen. Mr. Pons said that the nature of the business cycle will take care of some of these issues. Mr. Joseph said that it is too soon to come up with broad recommendations on this issue. Mr. Kafes suggested setting up a meeting for the Commission to discuss the City's economic development strategic plan.

The Commission discussed what comments it wished to make to the City Manager, and reached a consensus on the following issues: support of the City's continuing efforts on underground wiring as outlined in the proposed Capital Improvement Program, and specifically on Route 60 East near Quarterpath Road where utility lines crossing Route 60 and the CSX Railroad create an aesthetic problem. The Commission also supported efforts to improve the City's neighborhood infrastructure. Mr. Nester said that he would draft a letter outlining these issues for discussion at the February 14 regular meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Douglas Pons, Chairman
Williamsburg Planning Commission